

The University of Chicago

THE
CIVIL WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH
IN AMERICAN FICTION, 1861-1899

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE
1932

By
REBECCA WASHINGTON SMITH

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To Americans of the last half of the nineteenth century the Civil War was a turning-point in human affairs. They thought and talked much about it, and many of them wrote of it--histories, biographies, memoirs, anecdotes, poems, plays, works of fiction--in an endeavor to leave a record for posterity of the great conflict of their era. The list of novels and short stories alone is a long one. Yet this body of fiction has fared badly with the critics and literary chroniclers, who have most often dismissed it as trivial or ignored it entirely.¹ It has never been made the subject of a separate study. On the whole, Macy's indictment is characteristic:

Why do American writers turn their backs on life, miss its intensities, its significance? The American Civil War was the most tremendous upheaval in the world after the Napoleonic period...The novels laid in war time are either sanguine melodrama or absurd idyls of maidens whose lovers are at the front--a tragic theme if tragically and not sentimentally conceived...If no books had been written, the failure of that conflict to get itself embodied in some masterpieces would be less disconcerting. But thousands of books were written by people who knew the war at first hand and who had literary ambition and some skill, and from all these books none rises to distinction.²

It is possible, of course, that the American fiction dealing with the Civil War and its aftermath deserves these harsh

¹Early studies like Henry A. Beer, Initial Studies in American Letters (New York, 1895) and Barrett Wendell, A Literary History of America (New York, 1900) ignore it. Suggestive discussions of individual authors are found in F. L. Pattee, American Literature Since 1870 (New York, 1915) and The Development of the American Short Story (1923), and in Carl Vandenoren, The American Novel (New York, 1921), but no adequate consideration of the theme. Russell Blankenship, American Literature (New York, 1931), p. 523, states: "A few, a very few war novels had been published..." [prior to ca. 1895].

²John Macy, The Spirit of American Literature (New York, 1911), pp. 12-13.

judgements for its intrinsic shortcomings. However, the critical opinion of the last half century has been adverse toward all historical fiction, and the literary realists of America in the late nineteenth century were indifferent toward the genre, conditions which have not been conducive to open-minded criticism of Civil War stories. A relatively large body of writing, some of it by authors of note, upon a theme that long seemed vital to the nation, should not be dismissed as trivial before it has been investigated as a whole and judged in relation to the period that produced it. It is the object of this study to examine at first-hand most of the American prose fiction on the Civil War written between 1861 and 1899, to make it accessible for future research,¹ and to evaluate it in relation to the literary trends and social thought of the period.

I

The historical novel was the form of fiction most characteristic of the national temper and outlook of America from 1812 to 1860. An established vehicle for patriotic views and native themes, it was used by nearly all the major novelists--Cooper, Paulding, Kennedy, Simms, Hawthorne, Melville, Cooke, Mrs. Stowe--as well as by a host of minor ones. Already by 1840 the large national themes had been much written about, and there was a tendency to settle down to more limited geographical regions and to more exact use of historical sources until, by the fifties, many states and sections had their special chroniclers, most notably

¹The material has been compiled in a Dictionary Catalogue with subject, author, and title indexes. The titles were obtained from available bibliographies, subject catalogues, general reading, and an examination of the recognized literary monthlies of the period. Weekly periodicals, juveniles, and "dime novels" have not been included.

[Note: The Dictionary Catalogue is to be found only in the complete dissertation, which is in the University of Chicago Libraries.]

Virginia and New England.¹ Action and settings continued to be handled in the manner of Scott, the great exemplar, but American romancers followed Cooper's lead in discovering indigenous character types in their own regions. There appeared the "child of nature," usually an Indian until Uncle Tom in 1852; the native democrat, either a frontiersman or a countryman; the droll Dutchman; the puritan of New England and the cavalier of the Old South; and the faithful negro servant.² By the middle of the century literary influences other than Scott were operating upon historical fiction. Bulwer Lytton, Thackeray, Lever, Grant, G. P. R. James, and even G. A. Lawrence were offering models for emulation, tales of civilian life, and dashing military romances.³ War was depicted by American novelists as a proper means to patriotic ends, but less often recounted for its own attractions than in the English tales of the same period. Sentiment inevitably pervaded the historical stories as it did nearly all other fiction, yet on the whole presentations of the past withstood its softening influence better than domestic, contemporary tales.

The historical novel, standardized in these ways, was well

¹See E. E. Leisy, The American Historical Novel before 1860 (University of Illinois Dissertation, 1923), Chapter V. See also G. Harrison Orians, "The Romance Ferment after Waverley," American Literature, III (1932), 408-31.

²Tremaine McDowell in the "Historical Introduction" to The Spy (New York, 1931), p. xxvi, states that Cooper introduced into American fiction "that familiar and beloved type, the faithful old black servant."

³Grace Warren Landrum, "Sir Walter Scott and his Literary Rivals in the Old South," American Literature, II (1930), pp. 256-76; "Notes on the Reading of the Old South," American Literature, III (1931), pp. 60-91. George Cary Eggleston, "A Rebel's Recollections," Atlantic Monthly, XXXIV (1874), p. 95: "Our idea of the life and business of a soldier was drawn chiefly from the adventures of Ivanhoe and Charles O'Malley, two worthies with whose personal history almost every man in the army was familiar." In 1867 Bret Harte thought G. A. Lawrence's Guy Livingstone (1857) deserving of a burlesque in Condensed Novels (Collected Works [London, 1913], V, pp. 385-92).

established in America by 1860; but cross-currents of change were setting in, literary, social, and political. Most important of all was the impending struggle between the sections which altered the motives as well as the materials from which an American tale-teller would henceforth construct an account of the national past. The dime novel was inaugurated in 1860 by an enterprising publisher to please a large reading public, educated for the most part on no more than McGuffey's Fifth Reader, but eager to read stories.¹ The ever widening breach between North and South, social as well as political, served to intensify the localism of the historical chroniclers, and also to develop a type of novel dealing with sectional contrasts and partisan issues.² The war itself was essentially different literary material from the Revolution; it never attained the epic unity of the earlier conflict, but became a sort of War of the Roses, complicated and darkened by fraternal strife and long drawn out hatreds. In its complexities there was material for frank analysis and disillusioned pictures as well as for romance.

Soon after the war began, hastily written stories came out in the popular journals,³ just as tableaux and spectacles were presented promptly on the New York stage in '61.⁴ By 1862 numerous

¹William Everett, "Beadle's Dime Books," North American Review, XCIX (1864), 303-09; "The Beadle Collection" in the Bulletin of the New York Public Library, XXVI (1922), 555-628.

²Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, The Partisan Leader (1836); Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852); J. B. Jones, Wild Southern Scenes! A Tale of Disunion! and Border War! (1859, 1861).

³The magazines included in this survey show no items before 1862, but the reviewer of Beecher's Norwood in the Nation, VI (1868), 274, recalls the early fiction: "If our memory serves us, it was a week or ten days after the first Bull Run that the Waverley Magazine or some other family paper first brought out the young man who, looking nobly in his uniform, marches haughtily out of town at the head of his company. . ."

⁴A. H. Quinn, A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day (New York, 1927), I, 3-8.

writers had had personal experiences in connection with the struggle or had learned enough about it from others to incorporate it into stories and novels. In 1863 began a stream of war fiction by authors of power as well as amateurs and hacks that lasted until 1869 when it began to dwindle, largely because of the disillusionments of the reconstruction period.¹

A large section of this fiction of the sixties is intensely partisan, depicting not merely the conventional clashes of hero and villain in romance, but the burning hatreds of specific individuals.² Such novels as Epes Sargent's Peculiar (1863), Jeremiah Clemens's Tobias Wilson (1865), James R. Gilmore's Among the

¹It is useful to note the chronology of the most significant items during the sixties.

1862. C. F. Browne, Artemus Ward His Book; Rebecca Harding Davis, "John Lamar;" R. H. Newell, Orpheus C. Kerr Papers; Harriet E. Prescott Spofford, "Madeleine Schaffer."
1863. Louise M. Alcott, Hospital Sketches; Louise Chandler Moulton's stories in Harper's New Monthly Magazine; Henry Morford, In the Days of Shoddy; Epes Sargent, Peculiar.
1864. Louisa M. Alcott, On Picket Duty; Charles G. Halpine, Private Miles O'Reilly; D. R. Locke, The Nasby Papers; Harriet E. P. Spofford, "Ray;" Elizabeth S. Phelps Ward's stories in Harper's New Monthly Magazine; Augusta J. E. Wilson, Macaria.
1865. Jane G. Austin, Dora Darling; or, The Daughter of the Regiment; Jeremiah Clemens, Tobias Wilson; Rebecca Harding Davis, "Ellen;" Henry James, "The Story of a Year;" J. T. Trowbridge, "Coupon Bonds."
1866. Anonymous, Cotton Stealing; John Esten Cooke, Surry of Eagle's-Nest; James R. Gilmore, Among the Guerrillas; S. Weir Mitchell, "The Case of George Dedlow;" Charles H. Smith, Bill Arp--So-called; Mary V. H. Terhune, Sunnybank.
1867. L. Maria Child, A Romance of the Republic; S. L. Clemens, "The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract," Rebecca Harding Davis, Waiting for the Verdict; John W. DeForest, Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty; Bret Harte, "Mary McGillup. A Southern Novel after Belle Boyd;" Sidney Lanier, Tiger-Lilies; S. Weir Mitchell, "The Autobiography of a Quack."
1868. H. W. Beecher, Norwood; Anna E. Dickinson, What Answer?; Edward E. Hale, "The Skeleton in the Closet;" Mary J. Holmes, Rose Mather; R. H. Newell, Smoked Glass; W. D. O'Connor, "The Carpenter."
1869. John Esten Cooke, Hilt to Hilt; Mohun; John W. DeForest's stories in magazines.

²For a different view see Van Doren, op. cit., p. 125.

Guerrillas (1866), and Lydia Maria Child's A Romance of the Republic (1867) share the aliveness as well as the violence of Uncle Tom's Cabin. For example, Tobias Wilson, whose author had published some mediocre historical novels before the war, is a bad novel on nearly every count; yet the murder of old Johnson, the Alabama Unionist, is a scene not easily forgotten. In this decade the extremely partisan fiction has vigor; it is very close to actuality in atmosphere, and mirrors the passions of the day as no later writing has done. Such intense views tended in Northern fiction to lapse within a few years into the complacent tolerance of the victor; resentment lingered in the South, becoming increasingly sentimental when it was expressed by unreconstructed women and veterans.

If the partisan tales of sensational violence have kept some of their crude vigor, there is little of such vitality in the sentimental war tales of the sixties. Prolific short story writers, of whom the best known now are Louise Chandler Moulton, Nora Perry, and Caroline Chesebro, admitted into their mild, domestic episodes the faint echoes of conflict without disturbing the Godey-esque decorum of the parlor. On the other hand, Louisa May Alcott's Hospital Sketches (1863) and On Picket Duty (1864), and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward's "My Refugees" (1864) present authentic war situations, close to personal experience, but always softened and reworked into patterns of feeling. Perhaps the typical example of the excessively sentimental wartime novel is Macaria; or, The Altars of Sacrifice (1864), by Augusta Jane Evans Wilson. In it a perfect heroine, who has previously renounced a superlative hero at the behest of a heartless father, is quick in '61 to find new opportunities for renunciation and to become a martyr to the Confederacy. All the emotional stops are touched: lovers' partings,

ghastly wounds, deathbed scenes, and self-immolation. Mrs. Wilson uses a florid style, stiffened with erudition and piety, which was greatly admired by some of her readers and censured by others.¹

A sounder book and one which combines sentiment with homely rural character studies is Norwood (1868), Henry Ward Beecher's first novel, which he wrote for the New York Ledger. It is tolerant for the times in its sectional views, and obviously represents the author before he transferred his allegiance to the Radical party. It carries a mild plot of young lovers through the wartime in a fashion almost as trite as the tales of the lady magazine writers, with an additional load of piety; but it has also a group of convincing New England rural characters. It makes a careful contrast of Southern and Northern character types in the cases of two college friends who represent their sections, early instances in war fiction of the fixed conceptions of the sections.² The South is passionate, sensuous, wayward; the North is pious, sober, thoughtful. Norwood is also probably the first appearance of Lincoln in fiction in the role of a saintly patriarch dispensing personal succor to all who apply to him. Humorous writers had been introducing him as a character at least since Artemus Ward's famous interview, and one Southern novelist had already made him perform

¹Mrs. E. B. Cheeseborough, "The Female Writers of the South," The Land We Love, II (1867), 332, declares it "is decidedly the best novel, either North or South, called forth by the late war." Mrs. Mary T. Tardy, The Living Female Writers of the South (Philadelphia, 1872), pp. 270-80, calls the author the "De Stael of the South." James Ryder Randall, quoted in Tardy, *op. cit.*, p. 273, objects to her "ultra-classic and super-erudite style."

²It is instructive to compare such fictional characters with a passage in the Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 1910), IV, 312: "October 8 1837 . . . The young Southerner comes here a spoiled child, with graceful manners, excellent self-command, very good to be spoiled more, but good for nothing else. . . They are more civilized than the Seminoles, however, in my opinion, a little more." See also The Education of Henry Adams (Boston, 1918), pp. 56-59, for his estimate of "Rooney" Lee in 1854-58.

as a drunken dupe;¹ but Norwood began the Lincoln legend in fiction, anticipating some years the adoption of it by the politicians.

Two sentimental domestic novels of minor interest are Mary V. H. Terhune's ("Marion Harland") Sunnybank (1866) and Mary J. Holmes's Rose Mather (1868). Sunnybank carries on in a competent style the tradition of antebellum Virginia plantation life combined with a Unionist viewpoint. Rose Mather is a pious New England tale of the Norwood kind by a prolific writer who retained her feminine audience far into the next century. It is more difficult to dismiss casually the cloudy romances about the war which Harriet E. Prescott Spofford wrote early in the conflict. Wholly remote from the issues and innocent of the realities of warfare, she seized upon it as a chance for heightened emotional states of mind. "Ray," ostensibly an account of divided brothers and border strife, is wholly unconvincing; yet its elevated style and excitement suggest why Lowell accepted it for the Atlantic.

Religious emotion appealed to many of the mid-nineteenth century writers as proper fictional material, especially after the profound religious sentiment which pervaded the entire nation in 1861-65.² Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward's The Gates Ajar (1868) epitomizes the reaction of the orthodox, church-going mind to the war. A New England girl, Mary Cabot, whose only brother has been "shot dead," cannot become resigned to her loss until an older, wiser woman convinces her that Roy, having lost no whit of his personality, is in a Heaven where he converses with Lincoln and continues his life on earth. Religious digressions, serving to

¹R. H. Crozier, The Confederate Spy (1866).

²James Ford Rhodes, History of the Civil War, 1861-1865 (New York, 1917), p. 391. See also J. W. Jones, Christ in the Camp (Richmond, Va., 1887).

rationalize defeat, are common in Southern writing, but no such theological system as in The Gates Ajar. A curious half-religious story is W. D. O'Connor's "The Carpenter (1868), in which Walt Whitman, thinly disguised as a carpenter, figures as a sort of symbolical savior.

On the numerous silly, sentimental melodramas which abounded in the sixties it is unnecessary to dwell. Their titles sufficiently describe them: Pauline of the Potomac; or, General McClellan's Spy (1862); Clarimonde (1863), Dora Darling; or The Daughter of the Regiment (1864); Remy St. Remy; or, The Boy in Blue (1865).

The novelist who most completely followed the early nineteenth-century traditions of historical fiction in dealing with the Civil War was John Esten Cooke, F. F. V., whose active service in the Confederate army together with his career as a novelist before 1861 and as the biographer of Jackson and Lee admirably equipped him for the task. The general influence of the Scott-Carruthers-Simms tradition molded his war fiction as it had done his earlier books; but the use of other literary models is apparent as well: the sensationalism of Bulwer, the military gallantry of Lever and Grant, and the "historic truth" of Miss Muhlbach, the German fiction writer whose works gained a wide American public from the sixties on.¹

Cooke's first Civil War novel, Surry of Eagle's-Nest (1866), was published in New York and proved popular in the North. His flowing style, his power to recreate Jackson's Valley campaign

¹In "Miss Muhlbach and Her System," Appleton's Journal, XI (1874), 169-71, Cooke defends her "trick" of "confounding fact with fiction." Her Joseph II and His Court was published in Mobile by S. H. Goetzel in 1864. Philip St. George Cooke, uncle of John Esten, was the author of Scenes and Adventures in the Army; or Romances of Military Life (1856).

with something of the power of the Waterloo romancers, and his avoidance of the thorny issues of slavery and politics, contrived to please both sections at a time when interest in the war was fresh. Moreover Surry treats of that phase of the war which was least bitter, the early movements around Richmond. The novel deals chiefly with young love and gallantry and song; but, barring the subplot, which is pure intrigue, there is no especial reason to doubt the realness of its incidents and even of its temper. There is plenty of contemporary testimony to the air of light opera gaiety and light-heartedness which existed in Virginia in '61 and '62.¹ The adventures of the young staff officer in Surry are substantially Cooke's own; in his own family were divided kinsmen in the opposing armies. Later on Cooke said he "never liked the business of war;" hence his biographer believes that he was never at heart a soldier."² But the recantation of an aging man, made when reconstruction and the influence of the literary realists had dimmed the glamour of his novels, cannot change the status of Cooke as the spokesman in 1866 of hero worship and gallant courage, of the Carlylean tradition of the century which exalted war.

Two other novels, Mohun (1868) and Hilt to Hilt (1869; written 1867³), complete the memoirs of Colonel Surry of Eagle's-Nest. The former reflects the shadows of '63 to '65 as Surry had done the sunshine of '61 and '62; the description of doomed Richmond in Mohun is frank and unflattering. Hilt to Hilt, less solid with historical material than the other two novels, runs more easily into melodrama, pointing toward Charles King and even the

¹Constance Cary Harrison, "Virginia Scenes in '61" in Battles and Leaders (New York, 1888), pp. 160-66; George Cary Eggleston, "A Rebel's Recollections," Atlantic Monthly, XXXIV (1874), 95-101.

²John O. Beaty, John Esten Cooke, Virginian (New York, 1922), pp. 108-09.

³John O. Beaty, op. cit., p. 103.

the thrillers of the eighties. Few of the better writers of the sixties dealt so exclusively with the military side of war as did Cooke; civilian life or the unlocalized land of sentiment were oftener chosen. This tendency to depict war in terms of civilian life marked a swing toward the novel of manners and the realism that was beginning to express itself in American life and letters.

The first and the most consistently realistic attitude toward the war in the literature before 1870 is to be found in the fiction created by the popular humorists, Charles Farrar Browne, R. H. Newell, Charles G. Halpine, D. R. Locke, and Charles H. Smith. Artemus Ward, the showman of Browne, participates charily in the war-fever at Baldinsville despite his loyalty to the Union, and he views such phenomena as home guards, daughters of the regiment, and octoroons with cool disdain. Charles H. Smith's Bill Arp, the spokesman of commonsense in the Confederacy, is not unlike Ward in his blunt, kindly views. Arp, Mrs. Arp, the children, Tip, Potash, and all the "runagees" and slackers of middle Georgia mingle together in a scene that is not romantic.¹ The humorists deliberately set out to tell the truth. Charles G. Halpine's life of Private Miles O'Reilley, the Tammany soldier-poet, is of a different school of humor, the theatrical comedy of the New York stage, but it too aims at honesty.²

Partisan ridicule enters strongly into the Nasby Papers of D. R. Locke, whose Petroleum V. Nasby is a hypocritical copperhead wandering North and South in his rascally career. He takes on the characteristics of a rogue as he enlists in the Louisiana Pelicans only to desert, and then organizes a Northern church for his own

¹As a contrast with his realistic humorous tales, see "Romance of the War-- A True Story," Bill Arp, So Called (New York, 1866), pp. 182-201.

²Charles Graham Halpine, The Life . . . of Private Miles O'Reilley (New York, 1864), Preface.

purposes. But because Locke sees only one side of the struggle, his characters become caricatures and lose their life. A more thoroughgoing social critic was R. H. Newell, whose Orpheus C. Kerr Papers (1862-65) and Smoked Glass (1868) fall just short of being permanently good satirical fiction. Here are Orpheus, the political climber, Captain Villiam Brown of the New York Mackerel Brigade, a military take-off, Captain Munchausen of the Confederacy, a Southern braggart, and other sectional burlesques, through whose adventures the author ridicules the "chivalry," Northern Democrats, army red tape, and nearly every aspect of wartime Washington. Smoked Glass, written in the turbulent days of Andrew Johnson's administration, shrewdly shows the impeachment of the president as a political feud. The most searching satire, however, is reserved for the poverty-stricken Southern "cavaliers." With right Newell claims that he

has, for seven years past, studied a variety of our most dazzling national achievements through a piece of Smoked Glass, with results not less actually strengthening to the eye than astonishingly lessening to the brilliance and apparent magnitude of the military and political pageants surveyed.¹

Some of the humorous fiction of the wartime runs into parody. Mark Twain in his newspaper days did two such pieces, "The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract," and "The Siamese Twins."² In the first we trace with minute care the career of thirty barrels of beef which a Scotch contractor undertakes to deliver to General Sherman in 1861 but which never reach him. "The Siamese Twins" is a rather pointless travesty on the divided brothers theme. A better burlesque than either is "A Curious Experience," which he wrote later, hitting off the exaggerated

¹R. H. Newell, Smoked Glass (New York, 1866), p. 11.

²These stories are dated in the Hillcrest edition of Mark Twain's works as having been written in 1867 and 1868 respectively.

stories of spies during the war.

There were other parodies on war literature. Edward Everett Hale evidently found the post-war excuses of the Confederates in which defeat was charged to certain turns of fate both tiresome and amusing. In the Galaxy for 1866 he published anonymously "The Skeleton in the Closet. By J. Thomas Darragh (late C. C. S)," in which the downfall of the Confederacy is indisputably proved to have originated in an ill-fated set of hoop-skirts. Hale's ridicule is pointed but kindly.¹ Bret Harte's parody, "Mary McGillup, a Southern Novel. After Belle Boyd," in his Condensed Novels (1867) is equally pointed and not at all kindly. Belle Boyd, the famous Southern spy, with the collaboration of an English hack writer, G. A. Sala, had brought out Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison. Written by Herself a short time before. It really begins as ludicrously as Harte's parody, and furnished him with every chance for ridicule.² Harte seems here to have been attacking more than mere literary affectation in belittling grandiose Southern ideas of chivalry.

These humorists of the sixties who, according to their lights, ridiculed the shams and fanaticisms of the time had all too few followers in the Gilded Age; but they tended in the direction of realism and a curbing of false pretensions and excessive romanticisms in affairs and books.³

¹For the background of his parody see the "bits of confidential Confederate history in Harper's Magazine" to which Hale refers in the story; or The Land We Love. A Monthly Magazine devoted to Literature, Military History, and Agriculture (Charlotte, N. C., 1866-68), *passim*.

²Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison (New York, 1865), p. 13:

"Will you take my life?"

"This was the somewhat startling question put to me by Mrs. Hardinge--better known as Belle Boyd--on my introduction to her in Jermyn Street.

"'Madam,' said I, 'a sprite like you, who has so often run the gauntlet by sea and land,'" etc., etc.

³See Walter Blair, "Burlesques in Nineteenth Century Humor," American Literature, II (1930), 236-47.

As a matter of fact, there were many realistic trends in the early fiction dealing with the war. This tendency is clearly shown in various ways in a group of writers whose most significant work was done before 1870, Henry Morford, John W. DeForest, and Rebecca Harding Davis. Henry Morford was a prolific New York journalist with a good eye for details, and a critical attitude toward the conduct of the war that had its origins in his Democratic leanings. He was the first novelist to see the war in large issues. Of his three novels dealing with it, all published before the end of 1864, one at least has elements of interest. In the Days of Shoddy (1863) is intended as an indictment of graft among the politicians and contractors of the North who were furnishing paper shoes and rotten meat to the soldiers. It opens with a detailed view of New York City in the early days of the war, packed with details and common people. But after that the story runs off into melodrama, and the monotony of Morford's style shows him to be a journalist, never an artist. His novels seemed of import when they appeared if we may judge by a wide circulation; and they did make some contribution toward actuality in subject matter. Cotton Stealing (1866), a quite forgotten novel, goes much farther than Morford's books by laying bare an orgy of corruption in the Mississippi Valley Department, but it is hopelessly amateurish in plot and characterization. Both Morford and the author of Cotton Stealing fail through an excess of sensationalism.

A better writer than either was John William DeForest, who as a Union officer knew the war and reconstruction at first hand. He wrote numerous personal narratives for the magazines based upon his experiences in the South; and considering the bitterness of the times showed a fair understanding of the Southern people

if not of their institutions.¹ He is most effective as a fiction writer when he stays close to his reminiscent material, which serves as a corrective to his theatricality and exaggeration. Such a story as "Parole D'Honneur" (1868) reveals his real gifts as a writer--sympathetic observation of character types, and an eye for dramatic irony. A sensitive young ex-Confederate gives his word of honor to arrest an outlaw for the United States Government, and keeps his word at the cost of his sweetheart's love. DeForest won his reputation with a full length novel, Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty (1867), which received very high praise from the critics.² This is a powerful book whose finest character is a hard-drinking, hard-fighting Union officer with the graces and faults of his Southern birth. There are also unfavorable comments on Boston, truthful pictures of New Orleans under Butler, and a fine account of the battles of Cane River and Fort Winthrop. The realistic elements are discerned in the low key in which the love plot is pitched, and the unidealized versions of war and military occupation; but these are partially offset by apologies for the frankness, and by a conventionally happy ending. Miss Ravenel's Conversion remains DeForest's chief contribution to fiction, although he continued to write for many years. The Bloody Chasm (1881), which is laid in post-war South Carolina, should be cited as an instance of the depths to which his melodrama could sink.

Rebecca Harding Davis also utilized her personal experiences to a large degree in her fiction, including that on the war.

¹Compare his "Charleston under Arms," Atlantic Monthly VII (1861), 488-505, with "A Gentleman of the Old School" and The Bloody Chasm, fiction laid in Charleston.

²Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XXXV (1867), 401; Atlantic Monthly, XX (1867), 120-22; ibid., XXXII (1873), 611-21. The Atlantic reviewer in 1867, probably Howells, calls the novel "the first to treat the war really and artistically."

She had enjoyed unusual opportunities for observing American backgrounds and types in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Boston, and the Far South; and her residence on the border in 1861 gave her insight into the less romantic phases of a civil conflict.¹ She had just begun her realistic stories with "Life in the Iron Mills" in the Atlantic when the war opened; and her next work, although not concerned directly with it, was written in its shadow.² She did turn promptly to war themes, and "John Lamar," a short story, appeared in the Atlantic early in 1862. This is a strongly conceived situation involving four men: a misguided Southern aristocrat, a rational middle-class Northerner, a dogmatic abolitionist, and a brute negro who frees his own soul by killing his master to attain liberty. The thesis is too obvious for high artistry, but the story is free from sentimentality and unreality, the faults of much early magazine writing about the war. Mrs. Davis wrote other short stories about aspects of the struggle, some of which appeared as late as the nineties. Her most ambitious attempt was a novel, Waiting for the Verdict (1867), which fails to achieve any unity or to create any lasting character. It is a patchwork of places and ideas, all the more disappointing because both are worth something. Her realism was the realism of locality, of setting, which often welded her short stories into satisfying unity but which breaks down in her longer work. Nevertheless, she is the most consistent, if not the most powerful, of the realistic writers we have considered.

There remains to be noted briefly J. T. Trowbridge's "Coupon Bonds" (1865), a local color tale of the conversion of Pa and

¹Rebecca Harding Davis, Bits of Gossip (Boston, 1904), especially Chapter V which deals with the Civil War.

²Rebecca Harding Davis, Margret Howth. A Story of Today (Boston, 1862), pp. 3-7.

Ma Ducklow to patriotism, which the author dramatized in 1876. And there is Sidney Lanier's Tiger-lilies (1867), the conscious protest of an idealist against too literal realism and at the same time an unintentional example of the value of experiential material. He writes in the Preface:

This book's chief difficulty has been to avoid enriching reality at the expense of truth; a difficulty well known to those who have been astonished to find how the descriptions of eye-witnesses may contain nothing but facts and yet express nothing but falsehood.¹

Whereupon he devises a hazy plot of Germanized romance which is only partially redeemed by a realistic tail-piece of army adventures based directly upon the author's own experiences in the Confederate service.²

We see, then, that by 1870 the Civil War as a theme for fiction had engaged the attention of a large and representative group of American writers. Romantic and sentimental novels had been written, although with less power than early in the century; the new realistic mood had experimented tentatively and inconsistently, chiefly with the objective aspects of the struggle. No work of very high artistic worth was written about the war in prose fiction; Cooke's novels are the most finished, yet they can hardly be called great. But then no fiction of supreme rank on any other theme was written in America between 1861 and 1870.³ It was the seedtime of a new period.

¹Tiger-lilies (New York, 1867), p. v.

²Parts of Walt Whitman's Specimen Days are more fiction than personal narrative, as for example his description as an eye-witness of the retreat from First Manassas which he did not see. Complete Prose Works (Philadelphia, 1892), pp. 23-24.

³Eugene Benson, "Literature and the People, Galaxy, III (1867), 871-76. An intelligent comment on the "dearth of novelists on this side of the Atlantic, at least a dearth of able novelists."

II

The Civil War, broadly speaking, came to an end only in 1877 with the abandonment of the Radical program of reconstruction. During the stormy period between the assassination of Lincoln and the inauguration of Hayes it was as rare for a literary man to remain unswayed by political considerations as it had been during the war years for him to be unmoved by patriotism. The reconstruction era was more blighting in its effects on fiction dealing with the war than the four years of fighting had been. After '65 the old convictions continued to sustain some writers, as may be seen in the work of DeForest, Rebecca Harding Davis, and Cooke. Beecher, on the contrary, wrote no more war stories after the shift in political allegiance, despite his moderate success with Norwood. Some of the Radicals used fiction to express their views. Lydia Maria Child, a veteran New England writer, went to the limit of even the humanitarian position on racial equality in A Romance of the Republic (1867), which espoused not alone the cause of the negro but of the foreign immigrant as well. Anna E. Dickinson's What Answer? (1868), another passionate plea for intermarriage between the races, became a rallying cry for the adherents of Grant in the presidential campaign of that year.¹ In both novels the war was made secondary to the social and political issues involved. Such humanitarian zeal for the negro as "man and brother" died down in the seventies, leaving the theme of the war, as far as the North was concerned, chiefly in the hands of didactic patriots and writers like DeForest who were re-working earlier materials. Fred W. Loring's Two College Friends (1871) and the Reverend Mr. Homer White's The Norwich Cadets (1873) are instructive tales, not expressly for juvenile readers, but dealing with schoolboy soldiers

¹Claude G. Bowers, The Tragic Era (Boston, 1928), pp. 231-32.

in the mildly sentimental manner to be adopted a little later by the writers of countless books for boys.

Occasionally a better known writer used a war situation. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, who had been a correspondent for the New York Tribune in Virginia for a short while in 1861, drew upon his recollections of the Union camps for a little story, "Quite So" (1873), about a laconic soldier from Maine and his pathetic death. It is well written and interesting; indeed, Greenslet thinks it one of his best stories.¹ It is too superficial to be significant, however, and is a pertinent illustration of how faded the older romantic conventions of soldier life were becoming.² Still less convincing is Bret Harte's "The Christmas Gift that Came to Rupert" (1871), which merely transfers from mining camp to army camp the theme of the influence of a child upon rough men. Mark Twain utilized a pathetic reminiscence of negroes in wartime for "A True Story" (1874), one of his first appearances in the Atlantic.³

Southern fiction in the years around 1870 was at a low ebb in spite of a conscious effort on the part of literary patriots to utilize the materials at hand in the creation of a literature that would present their cause to the world.⁴ Naturally much of what was written dealt with the war in some fashion. Too much of it was

¹Ferris Greenslet, The Life of Thomas Bailey Aldrich (Boston, 1908), p. 58.

²C. Hartley Grattan, "Thomas Bailey Aldrich," American Mercury, V (1925), 41-45. A comparison of Aldrich's war stories with those of Bierce concludes: "Stylistically these men were near together; mentally they were miles apart."

³Life in Letters of William Dean Howells (ed. by Mildred Howells, New York, 1928), I, 194: Howells in a letter to M. M. Hurd in 1874 said, "I thought it ["A True Story"] wonderfully good--one of the most artistic things in its way I'd ever seen."

⁴A few examples are: The Land We Love, II (1867), 178-79; Southern Magazine, IX (1871), 612-14; Mrs. Mary T. Tardy, op. cit., 1-15; James Wood Davidson, The Living Writers of the South (New York, 1869), Introduction and passim.

by ladies who were amateurs in all save the ways of sentiment.¹ The best fruits of the movement are to be found in the Southern Magazine published in Baltimore in 1871-1875, where Richard Malcolm Johnston, Judge Bagby, A. B. Longstreet, and others carried on the soundest literary tradition of the Old South, its robust humor. But there was no new note in it, no force in this Southern writing during reconstruction. Not even John Esten Cooke's The Heir of Gaymount (1870) with its modest agrarian remedies for the ills of the section carried any conviction.

There are other scattered items of minor interest during reconstruction, but for our study these years are chiefly of importance as revealing certain trends in American life and letters which were drawing the most gifted fiction writers away from the historical novel and story, and from an interest in the Civil War period as literary material.

The greatest gap in a list of novelists who dealt with the Civil War is the omission of William Dean Howells. He was an abolitionist and more radical politically than Lincoln, whose campaign life he wrote in 1860. His keen concern for the outcome of the war is manifest in the letters he wrote from Venice in 1861-1865 about the conflict in which his brother and many friends were engaged.² In Columbus before his departure for Italy he had sometimes thought he "would write a novel, with its scene at our capital at that supreme moment when the volunteering began..."³ He did compose a poem at his father's request upon a young man reported killed at

¹Mary Magill Tucker, Women; or, Chronicles of the Late War (1871); Mrs. Sallie F. Chapin, Fitz-Hugh St. Clair, the South Carolina Rebel Boy; or, It is No Crime to be Born a Gentleman (1872); Maggie Roberts, Home Scenes during the Rebellion. By Eiggam Strebber (1875); Mrs. Lorenzo Dow, Gilbert St. Maurice (1875).

²Life in Letters of William Dean Howells, I, 3, 55, 60, 79.

³Ibid., I, 32-33.

First Manassas; and when the lad turned up alive, depersonalized it and put it in a volume of poems.¹ While he was in Venice he wrote a long poem in terza rima "dealing," as he expressed it, "with a story of our Civil War in a fashion so remote that no editor would print it."² Yet he seems to have felt no sense of loss at not sharing in the great adventure of his generation; characteristically he regarded it as a theme for literature, and he never wholly forgot in later years that he had once considered it so.³ When he was an old man he recalled his desire to depict the early days of the war in Ohio.

I have sometimes thought that I would write a novel, with its scene in our capital at that supreme moment when the volunteering began, but I shall never do it, and without the mask of fiction one cannot give the living complexion of events. . . . But possibly if I had written that forever-to-be-unwritten novel I might have plucked the heart out of the moment and laid it throbbing before the reader, and yet I might rather have been satisfied with the more subjective side of one who looked on, and baffled himself with the question of the event.⁴

The significant point is that he never did write such a novel. It is clear that as a man he was concerned over the issues of the war, and that in his early days as a writer he was not averse to it as a theme. If he never carried out his plans to use it, it was chiefly that he adopted a literary creed which was not congenial with it. Soon after his return from Venice he began an editorial connection with the Atlantic Monthly that lasted until 1881, years during which he formulated his critical doctrine of realism. In estimating the factors that contributed to that doctrine, it

¹Years of My Youth (New York, 1916), p. 236.

²Quoted in Pattee, American Literature Since 1870, p. 202.

³A Hazard of New Fortunes (New York, 1889), II, 113:

"By the way, March," said Fulkerson, 'what sort of an idea would it be to have a good war-story--might be a serial--in the magazine? The war has never fully panned out in fiction yet. It was used a good deal after it was over, and then it was dropped. I think it's time to take it up again.' . . . Beaton was saying to Fulkerson, 'You might get a series of sketches by substitutes, the substitutes haven't been much heard from in the war literature.'"

⁴Years of My Youth, p. 233.

should not be overlooked that the political views of the Atlantic committed him to anti-romanticism of one sort familiar in the sixties, a scornful distrust of the Southern "chivalry" and all its works.¹ Also, in the course of his duties as editor and reviewer, Howells necessarily read much poor historical fiction about the war, which, as we have seen, was usually cast in the old romantic tradition. It is more than probable that this contact with the declining historical romance helped to precipitate Howells's ultimate critical opposition to it.²

Writing about the war was by no means excluded from the pages of the Atlantic during Howells's connection with it. Personal narratives were welcomed, and even solicited. George Cary Eggleston has left a record of Howells's cordiality to him.

While I was in Boston [ca. 1873] Mr. Howells called on me, and in his gentle way suggested that I should write my reminiscences of Southern army life in a series of articles for the Atlantic Monthly. . . The passions aroused by the war of which I wrote had scarcely begun to cool at that time and there was a good deal of not very friendly surprise felt when the Atlantic's constituency learned that the great exponent of New England's best thought was to publish the war memories of a Confederate. . . That feeling seems to have been alert in protest. Soon after the first paper was published, Mr. Howells wrote me that it 'had brought a hornets' nest about his ears,' but that he was determined to go on with the series."³

Fiction using the war as a theme appeared also in the magazine under Howells's regime a score of times, and in it we have another indication of what the editor considered a proper use of it in literature. Mors of these stories are on civilian aspects of the war; many of them are close to reminiscences. There is little

¹A review of Richmond during the War in the Atlantic, XX (1867), 762, written in Howells's style, remarks: "The present book is in the spirit of all other subjugated literature concerning the war,--a vainglorious and boastful spirit. . . It contains sketches of public Rebels in civil and military station, washed in with the raw yellows, reds, and blues of Southern eulogy. . . It is an eloquent book, and--need we say?--a dull one."

²Criticism and Fiction (New York, 1891), pp. 116-17.

³George Cary Eggleston, Recollections of a Varied Life (New York, 1910), pp. 148-49.

partisanship, barring the current self-righteousness of the North regarding slavery. By chance in one of these works we can get a glimpse of the encouragement Howells gave to fiction that dealt with the problems of the war or reconstruction in the manner that he liked. William M. Baker, a preacher and fiction writer of the day, had done prior to 1874 several rather sensational things about the war. In that year he undertook to create for the Atlantic a study of Mose Evans, a child of nature in the wilds of Texas, brought into contact with a family of ruined South Carolina aristocrats in the years just after the war. The result is a weak novel, but Howells published it; and later Baker dedicated the volume to Howells with thanks for his help.¹ A comparison of Mose Evans with Baker's other fiction about the aristocrats of the South makes it pretty clear that Howells did all he could to help a man with first-hand knowledge of conditions in the post-war South to write a realistic novel of manners.

It has been necessary to go into some detail in discussing the relation of Howells to fiction dealing with the war because of his central position in the period with which we are concerned. Although he temperamentally and theoretically disliked war, his avoidance of the theme and his unfriendly attitude toward the historical romances about it were motivated not primarily by temperament but by his literary doctrine of realism, a realism which stressed the average, the commonplace, the "more smiling aspects of life," and therefore had little affinity with the events of 1861 to 1876 in American life.

¹William M. Baker, Mose Evans (New York, 1874), Dedication: "To Mr. W. D. Howells. "My dear Mr. Howells, As this book was written in moments snatched from that Profession which is the chief business of my life, it has devolved--during its publication in the 'Atlantic Monthly'--a degree of labor upon you as Editor, which I have all along greatly regretted. Allow me, then, to inscribe the volume to you. . ."

The extent of the influence of the Civil War upon the career of Henry James is a disputed point among his critics,¹ although he himself has explained at some length in Notes of a Son and Brother what he calls his "relation to the war."

All of which [his being incapacitated], none the less, was not to prevent the whole quite indescribably intensified time --intensified through all lapses of occasion and frustrations of contact--from remaining with me as a more constituted and sustained act of living, in proportion to my powers and opportunities, than any other homogeneous stretch of experience that my memory now recovers.²

And again he writes of the effect of the war as a whole.

The War had by itself of course, on the ground I speak of, communicated something of the quality, or rather of the quantity, otherwise deficient; only this was for my case, of which alone I speak, an apprehension without a language or a channel--a revelation as sublime as one would like to feel it, but spreading abroad as a whole and not, alas, by any practice of mine, reducible to parts. What I promptly made out at Cambridge was that 'America' would be given, as I have called it, to a tune altogether fresh, so that to hear this tune wholly played out might well become on the spot an inspiring privilege.³

With the exception of S. Weir Mitchell, James seems to have felt the psychological impact of the war more keenly and with more understanding of its larger implications than any other novelist who has left us a record of his reactions. It was the soldiers who gripped his interest, not only his gallant younger brothers in the Union army and their comrades who died, but all the men. The incident on which he dwells longest in his Notes is an afternoon's visit to a hospital nearby when he "perhaps positively anticipated Walt Whitman," as he puts it, in establishing a comradeship with the wounded men. In '65 he was concerned over "the ending of the War and the absorption of an army."

¹Rebecca West, Henry James (London and New York, 1916), Chapter I, urges that his nonparticipation in the war was the chief reason why he remained an onlooker throughout his life. Cornelia P. Kelley, The Early Development of Henry James (Reprint from University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XV (1930), 1 and 2, pp. 23-24), discounts the effect of the war upon him.

²Notes of a Son and Brother (New York, 1914), p. 243.

³Ibid., pp. 304-05.

It is not surprising that his first published story, "The Story of a Year" (1865), is a war story. It is a study of the effect of that "quite indescribably intensified time" upon a coquette and her lovers, one of whom is a soldier. What might have been a conventional tale becomes a study in the character of a shallow woman who shares none of the greatness of the times. It is a good first story, even for Henry James. He did other stories for the Atlantic in which the conflict is the background for character studies. "A Most Extraordinary Case" (1868) presents the subtle psychological case of a wounded Union officer whom life defeats after he comes back from the war. "Poor Richard" (1867) has only the shadow of the war across it, but it too has the feeling that the characters are in tune with larger rhythms than their own actions.

These treatments of the war imply no interest on James's part in the traditional historical novel. In his first published review he had already taken occasion to announce the end of the Scott tradition.

We write historical tales differently now. We acknowledge the beauty and propriety of a certain poetic reticence. But we confine it to poetry. The task of the historical storyteller is, not to invest, but to divest the past.¹

And, he adds, "thoroughly to enjoy him [Scott] we must again become as credulous as children at twilight." His critical theories pointed him away from interest in war or reconstruction; and these little stories are of minor importance in his final achievement.² But he was for a time deeply interested in the effects of the Civil

¹Unsigned review of Essays on Fiction, North American Review, XCIX (1864), 580-87.

²Ernest Bernbaum, "The Views of the Great Critics on the Historical Novel," Publications of Modern Language Association, XLI (1926), 495, thus defines James's attitude toward the historical novel: "He was not in the least prejudiced, but he was pre-occupied,--preoccupied with literature based on the study of contemporaneous life; and his critical essays in their general tendency were not helpful to historical romance."

War on its soldiers and their renewed contacts with normal life. The disillusionments of the nation from 1865 to 1876 must have had no small part in sending him elsewhere to seek a more gracious civilization.

With Mark Twain, the avoidance of any serious treatment of the war and its aftermath was more deliberate and more important than with either Howells or James. Reared along the Mississippi during the boom days of the Cotton Kingdom, he knew the South as no outsider ever could know it. Yet to it he never gave his allegiance. After a farcical career in the Confederate service, he renounced it;¹ and often in his later years he waged war upon the pseudo-chivalry which he saw in its life.² He commonly dealt with the war as a subject for burlesque whether he was addressing a veterans' banquet or concocting such a tall tale as "A Curious Experience" to take off the secret service stories.³ No novelist of the late nineteenth century was so well endowed as he to be the chronicler of the revolution which overthrew the aristocracy of the South, and to become the social critic of its institutions. He nearly did so in The Gilded Age (1873) and again in Pudd'nhead Wilson (1894), but in neither did he deal directly with the war or probe deeply into its effects. Like Howells and James he turned aside from the theme; unlike them he was denying expression to his natural gifts in doing so.

In spite of the indifference of the major novelists, after 1877 a new era was inaugurated in the literary treatment of the

¹"The Private History of a Campaign that Failed," in Merry Tales, Mark Twain's Works (Hillcrest edition, New York and London, 1906), XXI, 255-82.

²For example, his famous indictment of Sir Walter Scott in Life on the Mississippi in Works, IX, 290-91.

³"Speech on the Babies. At the Banquet, in Chicago, given by the Army of Tennessee to their first commander, General U. S. Grant, November, 1879" in Works, XX, 388-91.

war. At last the struggle was over; one could see the war and reconstruction as a single, long drawn-out conflict. From then on the "bloody shirt" was waved less and less frequently; only the political extremists refused to join in the general desire for reconciliation. And a new group of authors began to write about the conflict and about reconciliation.

Chief among the political "die-hards" was Albion W. Tourgée, school teacher, Union soldier, carpetbagger judge in North Carolina, professional author, and agitator. His first novel, Toinette (1874), republished in 1881 as A Royal Gentleman, was written, according to the author, "in 1868-9, amid the scenes and shortly after some of the veritable incidents which it describes," and, he adds, he had no intention at that time of publication.¹ Toinette is an old-fashioned romance, laid in antebellum and war times, of the beautiful octoroon and her heartless Southern master, a theme dating back certainly to Boucicault's Octoroon. It was much the sort of thing with which Anna Dickinson had won votes for Grant in 1868, but it was no longer of great interest in 1874, and excited no especial comment.² However, when Judge Tourgée shook the dust of North Carolina from his feet in 1879, he took with him two nearly completed novels, both dealing with a more timely topic --reconstruction. Figs and Thistles and A Fool's Errand, both published that year, showed the South under Radical rule with a boldness that won immediate notoriety for the author. Had they appeared six or eight years earlier, as they might easily have done so far as their subject matter and viewpoint are concerned,

¹A Royal Gentleman (New York, 1881), 111.

²Roy F. Dibble, Albion W. Tourgée (New York, 1921), p. 145, is of the opinion that "Toinette is with little doubt the first piece of fiction dealing directly with the problem of Reconstruction." As the book does not deal with the problems of reconstruction, it is probably better to give that priority to John W. DeForest. See the Subject Index to the Dictionary Catalogue under "Reconstruction."

they would conceivably have molded public opinion after the manner of Uncle Tom's Cabin. They were passionate sermons for the Radical cause that would have delighted the heart of Thaddeus Stevens; but they came too late for any political results. They were obsolescent specimens of the partisan fiction of the previous decade. They aroused the interest of the North and the wrath of the South, calling forth imitations and replies.¹ But that was all.

Nevertheless, Tourgée, who conceived of fiction in large terms, evolved an ambitious series of historical novels. As he explains in his prefaces, his six novels deal with "the great transition."

In chronological order they would stand as follows: Hot Flowshares, Figs and Thistles, A Royal Gentleman, A Fool's Errand, Bricks Without Straw, John Eax. . . . It is believed that it constitutes the most serious attempt ever made to portray the various phases of a climacteric era, by successive pictures of the various forms of life developed thereby. . . .²

The series as a whole is tiresome and over-emphatic. Tourgée's constant reiteration of his political and social doctrines in novel after novel is too great a strain upon his conventional plots and characters. The best remembered and the most effective one of the series is A Fool's Errand, which recounts the failure of Colonel Comfort Servosse, who is none other than the author thinly disguised, to apply the doctrines of the Radical party in North Carolina in 1866. The plot is negligible; the style is turgid; the digressions are endless; but, like the violent fiction of the sixties, A Fool's Errand is a book which is still alive. It was dramatized by the author and Steel Mackaye in 1881 as an acting vehicle for Mackaye. Tourgee wrote other fiction about the

¹Among the early imitations of Tourgée's A Fool's Errand in fiction were: George C. Benham, A Year of Wreck (1880); Mrs. Harriet N. K. Goff, Other Fools and Their Doings (1880); O. T. Beard, Bristling with Thorns (1883); N. J. Floyd, Thorns in the Flesh (1884); The Shadow of the War (1884), attributed to S. T. Robinson.

²Hot Flowshares (New York, 1883), Preface, p. 4.

war and reconstruction, some as late as 1898, along with many other literary endeavors. He narrowly missed creating a permanently important work in A Fool's Errand, chiefly because he was looking backward in the direction of sectional opposition instead of forward with the times toward reconciliation.

The first capable exponent in fiction of the new attitude of reconciliation was a lady of real distinction in her own day, one to whom Henry James accorded a whole essay in Partial Portraits --Constance Fenimore Woolson, niece of Cooper, and an indefatigable sketcher of the American scene. She began her pictures of the war with "Wilhelmina," in 1875. It is a tale of civilian life in a German community in Ohio; and, save for a somewhat sentimental ending, the unrequited love of Wilhelmina for a stupid soldier is handled with restraint. It was, however, "Rodman the Keeper," with which Howells led off the Atlantic for March, 1877, that established her reputation.¹ The story relates how John Rodman, custodian of the National Cemetery in a stricken Southern community just after the war, loves Bettina Ward, type of the unreconstructed Southern beauty, whose pride and bitter memories stand between them. This theme was already well worn in 1877: the patient Northern hero and the passionate Southern woman; but Constance Fenimore Woolson handles it with a touch of sincerity that redeems its triteness, and with an understanding of Southern pride that gives it a new ring. She wrote other stories in the same vein, but none that was so well received.

The estimate of her work by Henry James points out what she meant to her time.

Miss Woolson has done nothing better than the best pages in this succession of careful, strenuous studies of certain aspects of life, after the war, in Florida, Georgia and the

¹Clare Benedict, editor, Constance Fenimore Woolson, (London, 1930), pp. 23-24.

Carolinas.....especially when regarded in the light of the voicelessness of the conquered and reconstructed South. Miss Woolson strikes the reader as having a compassionate sense of this pathetic dumbness--having perceived that no social revolution of equal magnitude had ever reflected itself so little in literature, remained so unrecorded, so unpainted and so unsung.¹

Disappointing as the decade of the seventies seems when viewed as a whole, a promising trend is the development of the intersectional contrasts of manners, not in single characters pitted against each other as the earlier novels had done, but somewhat in the fashion of the international novel of the period. Like to Like (1878), by Mrs. Katherine Sherwood Bonner McDowell ("Sherwood Bonner"), is a sincere attempt to portray the types of a Southern town on the eve of the elections of 1876 as contrasted with the ways of a Northern resident there. Sherwood Bonner's pleasant stories of Alabama and Mississippi come as early harbingers of the Southern local color movement. She raises a voice for reconciliation as Constance Fenimore Woolson does. The war and its aftermath could henceforth be thought of in the past tense. The good feeling that came in the wake of political peace fostered optimism and a new wave of sentiment, and directed attention to sections of the South which had long been obscure or inarticulate in literature.

III

About 1880 American fiction entered upon a period of expansion and achievement;² and a number of notable writers as well as literary hacks found the theme of the war significant in the light of the national spirit of reconciliation. The dime novelists seized upon the war in earnest, and by 1883 were pouring out weekly

¹"Constance Fenimore Woolson," Harper's Weekly, XXXI (1887), 114. Later included in Partial Portraits (1888).

²Carl VanDoren, op. cit., p. 221; F. L. Pattee, The Development of the American Short Story (New York, 1923), 268-90.

books, thrilling tales of adventures in both armies.¹ These thrillers were essentially non-partisan in spirit, although they reiterated the accepted patriotism of the nation. They sometimes deliberately courted favor with Southern readers by misleading titles.² Stories were brought to light in the eighties that had been refused by publishers in the seventies because of lack of interest in the subject.³ In 1880 Thomas Nelson Page sold his first gentle sketch of war times to the Century Magazine, although it was not published for four years. In 1881 Maurice Thompson essayed to view the South impartially in A Tallahassee Girl, a novel stressing reconciliation and commercial rehabilitation for Florida, and again in His Second Campaign (1883), which heals the wounds of hate with marriage between a Northern officer and a Southern girl.

It was in response to this general interest that the editors of the Century Magazine planned in the summer of 1883 a series of articles which developed into Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (1884-1887). This series, really an enormous collection of personal narratives, scored an immediate success, and by its

¹In Maurice C. Walsh, Under the Stars and Bars (New York, 1883) is an advertisement of the "War Library," "the Unwritten History of the War. Historically true, as to dates and occurrences; graphically true as regards possibilities..." It includes at that time 55 titles. The "Catalogue Pocket Edition of the War Library," with 3 different titles is advertised in the same book.

"The Beadle Collection," Bulletin of the New York Public Library, XXVI (1922), 555-628, lists No. 75 of "American Tales," a series of Civil War dime novels which began in 1864; and No. 25 of the "Army and Navy Library" in 1883ff. It lists only one number of the "War Library"--No. 233.

²Under the Stars and Bars; or, The Wearing of the Gray, cited above, really tells of two Union heroes, one of whom serves unwillingly as a Confederate conscript.

³Maurice Thompson, Stories of the Cherokee Hills (Boston, 1900), pp. 5-6: "Now, albeit the war was ended, politics had taken on the bitterness engendered by reconstruction troubles, and when these sketches on the 'color-line,' written early in the seventies, were offered to editors they were promptly rejected. . . So my stories of slavery, war, emancipation, and reconstruction in the Southern mountain region were cast aside and lay in the manuscript for years..."

policy of honoring the brave men on both sides fostered the spirit of fraternity among the veterans,¹ and furnished unlimited materials for future fiction and drama. The tenor of Battles and Leaders is frank about the conduct of the war but idealistic and patriotic in regard to its objects and results, an attitude which is characteristic of the decade. By this time the "New South" had agreed to accept Appomattox as the work of Providence rather than of Yankee villainy, and was busying itself trying to catch up with Northern progress,² which meant chiefly Northern economic prosperity. The New South, albeit still sentimental about the Lost Cause, was realistic about the present and optimistic over the future. A corresponding Northern conception of the outcome of the war as Providential involved the corollary that business prosperity measured in millions was also a Providential reward for patriotism.³

The middle-class Northern view of the war as a Heaven-directed blessing in disguise whose problems all yield to love and business enterprise was most complacently set forth by the Reverend Mr. Edward Payson Roe in numerous novels. His use of sensational incidents and his all-pervasive sentiment combined to make him a favorite with the general reading public for many years. Roe began to handle the theme of the war in 1883 with His Sombre Rivals,

¹Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (Edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and C. C. Buel. New York, n.d.), pp. ix-x: "With the main purpose in its origin of interesting veterans in their own memories and of instructing the generation which has grown up since the War for the Union, the 'Century War Series,' through peculiar circumstances, has exerted an influence in bringing about a better understanding between the soldiers who were opposed in the conflict. . . . Within six months from the appearance of the first battle paper, the circulation of 'The Century' advanced from 127,000 copies to 225,000, or to a reading audience estimated at two millions."

²Henry W. Grady, The New South (New York, 1890), pp. 23-25, 141-273.

³See John W. Draper, History of the American Civil War (New York, 1870), III, 641-43, for the idea of Providence in history; B. J. Lossing, The American Centenary. A History of the Progress of the Republic . . . (Philadelphia, 1876), pp. 24-26 and passim for a review of economic prosperity.

which will serve to illustrate his work. The Preface clears up his position on most points. After a tribute to the valor and sincerity of both sides, a gesture common by this date, and an explanation of his military accuracy, he defends his lack of realism.

The title of the story will naturally lead the reader to expect that deep shadows rest upon many of its pages. I know it is scarcely the fashion of the present time to portray men and women who feel very deeply about anything, but there certainly was very deep feeling at the time of which I write, as, in truth, there is today.¹

The novel itself sheds light on the fashions in sentiment in late nineteenth century America. The strong, silent hero, Graham, a Union officer, is a lover first and a soldier afterward; and from the battle of First Manassas on the interest shifts steadily toward his repressed passion for the heroine and the intricacies of his ultimate reward in conjugal bliss. The author devises a middle-class hero whose renunciation is repaid with love and money and crowned with religion. Of his three other novels on the war, An Original Belle (1885) is the least melodramatic in plot, but it is a lesson in prudence and patriotism, a view of the war as it was fought in a young lady's parlor. Like Tourg  e, Roe refused to be chastened by the critical realists of the day, and carried on the popular tradition of "matter-of-fact romance."

A prolific romancer of a different stamp was Charles King, who dignified the tale of the Civil War with the gallantry and manners of a regular army officer. Kitty's Conquest (1884) deals with reconstruction in the deep South and the Kellogg-McEnery riots in 1872, at which time it was "mainly written," but it was not published until after the author had won recognition with a story of army life in the West. In Kitty's Conquest the gallant young officer of all King's stories wins his lady while fighting his country's battles; but there is more civilian background and

¹His Sombre Rivals (New York, 1883), p. iv.

realism here than in the later, more stereotyped tales. King belittles the Ku Klux Klan with an army man's scorn for what seemed to him a band of outlaws, but his sympathy is with the aristocratic South. He is not deeply interested in political issues, however; his loyalties are simple, like the motives of his characters. In A War Time Wooing (1888), Between the Lines (1889), and The General's Double (1898) the scene shifts to Virginia, the proper land for romantic warfare in the sixties; and we follow the familiar formula of love and gallantry. The most convincing character study in King's Civil War books is the volunteer officer in Captain Close (1894), a reversion to the scene and manner of Kitty's Conquest.

The romances of King suggest the vogue for Civil War plays in the eighties and certain parallels between the uses of the war made in fiction and in drama. The dramatizations of several war novels have been noted, and to that list should be added the obvious debt of Boucicault's Belle Lamar (1874) to the famous book by Boyd which Bret Harte lampooned so keenly. According to Quinn, it was William Gillette's Held by the Enemy (1886), "the first important drama of the Civil War," which defined the type of melodrama that was to prove popular for twenty years.¹ It would seem that the dramatists were frequently indebted to the fiction writers for their materials, while, at least from 1886 on, theatrical technique was influential in shaping the plots and characters of the prose romances. Both were guided by the trends of the times.

¹A. H. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 216. Among the most popular plays were: Bronson Howard, Shenandoah (1888); Augustus Thomas, Alabama (1891) and Surrender (1892); David Belasco, The Heart of Maryland (1895); William Gillette, Secret Service (1895); Clyde Fitch, Barbara Frietchie (1899); James A. Herne, The Reverend Griffith Davenport (1899).

The novelist who most successfully put into practice the principles of realism as laid down by Howells and James was the Philadelphia physician, S. Weir Mitchell, who had studied thousands of wounded soldiers in the Union hospitals during the war. A recent biographer has pointed out the formative effect of the experience upon him.

What this War meant to Dr. Mitchell only those closest to him entirely realized. 'Whatever his thoughts henceforth,' says one of them, 'deep down was that memory perpetual. . . . His tales and poems, no matter what their subjects, all come from a spirit over which has passed the great vision; every drop of ink is tintured with the blood of the Civil War.'¹

The "great vision" was for Mitchell the spectacle of character molded by the trials of war, not alone battle but the temptations of the time. Two short stories in the Atlantic, long before he wrote fiction regularly, show his natural bent. "The Case of George Dedlow" (1866), published anonymously, analyses the mental state of a soldier who has lost both arms and both legs. "The Autobiography of a Quack" (1867) is the confessions of a medical rogue. Mitchell felt the lack of a novel telling "the personal life of a war-surgeon; what he did day by day, in the field or in the hospital;"² and he evidently had such a book in mind when he wrote In War Time (1884). Here is the slow unfolding of the effect of the great crisis on an inherently weak character. Dr. Ezra Wendell, a surgeon in the Union hospital at Philadelphia in 1863, has, as we learn later, already proved a coward under fire at the front; but the exigencies of the times give him a second chance for success and happiness. Little by little the temptations beat down his morale until at the end he creeps away in disgrace. There are no high moments, for the author follows the realist creed too

¹Anna Robeson Burr, Weir Mitchell. His Life and Letters (New York, 1929), p. 98.

²Ibid., p. 114.

strictly to let us see Wendell on the battlefield or even in the deepest moments of his final fall. For that reason, probably more than any other, the book fails to come off; it does not move the reader to feel the significance of what he is observing. Even so, In War Time is one of the best novels about the Civil War in American fiction before 1899.

Perhaps In War Time revealed to Mitchell the uncongeniality between his theme and his technique, for in Roland Blake (1886) he begins with a secret service exploit, includes a charge at the Bloody Angle, and utilizes a whole set of conventional characters: the Southern vampire, her weak Confederate brother, and the noble Union officer. The most subtle character study is that of the neurotic Southern woman, a type that recurs in Doctor Mitchell's books. In Roland Blake he swung into line early with the traditional historical romancers, although he never ceased to develop well-rounded characters.

The creed of realism as it was being advocated by influential American critics was favorable to the local colorists.¹ There was encouragement for writers who faithfully reproduced the life of particular localities; and it was inevitable that many of these stories would deal with the war and its effects, especially in the South. Indeed, it was largely the shadow of the recent conflict that transformed the Southern folk and countryside into significant subjects for literature. Hardly a writer from that section in the eighties but has left "tales of a time and place" scarred by battle.

¹Southern Lights and Shadows (Edited by William Dean Howells and Henry M. Alden. New York, 1894-1907), Introduction, by William Dean Howells: "The most noticeable characteristic of the extraordinary literary development of the South since the Civil War is that it is almost entirely in the direction of realism. . . and in their search for literary material could find nothing so good as the facts of their native life. The more 'commonplace' these facts the better they seemed to like them." The novelettes included are almost all of the local color school.

Thomas Nelson Page's stories of the F. F. V. carry on a long, established literary tradition of gracious plantation life. But where the earlier writers had emphasized pride, aristocratic luxury, and romantic adventure, he oftenest shows loyalty between master and slave, a loyalty based upon mutual love and service. "Marse Chan" (1884) and "Meh Lady" (1886) leave the reader sad that war, any war, could destroy a way of living so gracious and simple. He envelopes his conventional characters and plots with a glamorous atmosphere that would be ultra-romantic if it were not for the realistic dialect of the negroes. Page's great creation is the faithful slave, a familiar type in romance, but realized by him as a permanent literary creation. Pathos and restraint also mark such stories as "The Burial of the Guns," one of the few good uses in fiction of Lee's surrender, and "Little Darby," a Southern view of the poor whites. Red Rock. A Chronicle of Reconstruction (1898) was less successful than his stories of shorter length. It is a partisan view, although Page keeps his temper as Tourg  e did not. In 1898 it seemed neither very romantic nor very realistic; it belongs rather to the tradition of the late seventies.

The poor man's view of the war found a spokesman in Joel Chandler Harris, who, as a boy in Georgia, had sat on a fence and watched Sherman's army march by.

For once and all, so far as Joe was concerned, the glamour and romance of war were dispelled. The skies were heavy with clouds, and a fine, irritating mist sifted down. The road was more than ankle-deep in mud, and even the fields were boggy. There was nothing gay about this vast procession, with its tramping soldiers, its clattering horsemen, and its lumbering wagons, except the temper of the men. They splashed through the mud, cracking their jokes and singing snatches of song.¹

¹On the Plantation (New York, 1892), pp. 227-28.

Harris worked under William Tappan Thompson in his early newspaper career, an association that helped to confirm his bent toward realism. He was a friend of Henry W. Grady, and helped him to make the Atlanta Constitution an organ of the New South policy of reconciliation.¹ When Harris turned to writing short stories after his success with the Uncle Remus tales, he began in 1883 a series of accounts of the war among the poor whites of the Georgia mountains. This is not war according to romantic notions that he shows in "At Teague Poteet's," but an unheroic picture of crackers dodging the Confederate conscript officers and usually outwitting them. Nor do Captain Mosely and Private Chadwick in the later tales have any gallant adventures while carrying on their dull and hateful duties among the civilians. Later on Harris developed other types of war stories out of his rich store of memories: soldier life with Private O'Halloran, a rollicking Irishman; conventional sentiment in "Aunt Fountain's Prisoner;" and even detective yarns of the Confederate Secret Service in "Why the Confederacy Failed" and other stories in the Saturday Evening Post. His realistic versions of the war among the crackers remain the most original and convincing. Through all his works about wartime --and no one has written more variously of it in fiction--a few ideas run consistently. There is no real racial antagonism between white man and black, if each keeps his place; the South was wrong in the issues for which the war was fought, but not disgraced; commonsense bids both parties to forget hatreds and help each other. Grady's "The New South" could serve as a text for every war story Harris wrote, and he became one of the forces for bringing about reconciliation.²

¹Julia Collier Harris, The Life and Letters of Joel Chandler Harris (Boston, 1918), p. 140.

²Julia Collier Harris, op. cit., p. 511, quotes Theodore Roosevelt's remark that Harris had done much to bring together the different sections, "having written what exalts the South . . . and yet what has not even a flavor of bitterness toward any other part of the Union."

The commonsense and humor of Harris stand midway between Page's reverence for the Old South and the disillusioned view of the war in the writings of George W. Cable before 1899. Despite his youthful service in the Confederate army, Cable discerned weakness as well as picturesqueness in Southern life. After four volumes of fiction showing Louisiana local color, he turned in 1885 to the war in New Orleans with Dr. Sevier. He used facts of which he knew to create a sober character study. The central figure, a Unionist who is convinced that the South is wrong, remains an onlooker, registering the stresses of the time on a sensitive mind. The plot and background are colorful, and therefore somewhat incongruous with the main theme. Dr. Sevier invites comparison with In War Time, an almost exactly contemporary use of the war in a realistic manner.

Cable's next war story is excellent. "Carancro (1887), later incorporated into the long pastoral, Bonaventure, catches admirably the pathetic helplessness of the Cajun folk when they are dragged unwillingly into a conflict of which they know nothing. It is a local color story of universal meaning. In John March, Southerner (1894) Cable undertook to analyze the forces of reconstruction in the "state of Dixie." He wrote it in 1890 and sent it to Gilder of the Century Magazine, who declined it because it was more a tract than a novel.¹ Although it was rewritten, it still merits Gilder's criticism in part; the characters are smothered by the issues. Late in the nineties Cable wrote again on the war in high romantic vein,² but there is little doubt that these earlier stories are closer to his real convictions.

¹Lucy Leffingwell Cable Bickle, George W. Cable (New York, 1928), pp. 212-14.

²The Cavalier (1901); Kincaid's Battery (1908).

The number of lesser treatments of the war in this decade is large. Mary N. Murfree touched upon it lightly in dealing with the Tennessee mountaineers. And James R. Gilmore, a veteran partisan writer from the sixties, revived his memories of East Tennessee in A Mountain White Heroine (1889) to exalt the primitive hill folk as a barrier against the ominous tide of immigration. His book is an anachronism. With no slave aristocracy to attack, his violence falls flat; but his work serves as a measure of the changes that had come about in the national temper and in fiction by 1889. The example of Page inspired a number of imitators. The simple outline of letting an old negro tell about antebellum glories and wartime memories seemed an easy one to follow. Some of his followers are worthy of him: A. C. Gordon, a collaborator rather than follower, Mollie Elliott Seawell in The Berkeleys (1888), and Fanny Witherspoon Mason in Daddy Dave (1886). The regionalists of Louisiana and the Southwest owed more to Page than to Cable. Grace King in "Bayou L'Ombre" (1887) and Mollie E. Moore Davis in her gentle tales throw over the war a soft light that brings out only pity for the conquered. Outside of any tradition are Wilbur F. Hinman's Corporal Si Klegg and His "Pard" (1887), a tale of volunteer soldier life in comic vein that was to be imitated later; and George A. Townsend's worthy but belated Katy of Cococotin (1886), which tries to recreate wartime Maryland in the Scott manner.

By about 1890 the traditional attitudes toward the great American conflict had been rather fully expressed in fiction. Most of the battles and leaders had been reproduced in its pages; most of the geographical localities touched by war, North and South, had been used for settings; the old plot patterns and characters of historical romance had been exemplified over and over

with a few democratic innovations.¹ It is well at this point to take inventory of the stock literary materials which had accumulated in the generation that followed the guns of Sumter.

We have noted the tendency from the beginning for fiction writers to make more extensive use of civilian life than of military exploits. This trend had varying effects. On the one hand, it lessened the emphasis on romantic adventure and increased that on everyday affairs and unheroic actions. On the other, it increased greatly the share of women in the whole scene and so fostered sentimental situations. The most popular and dramatic motive in Civil War literature was that of the Union soldier-lover and the Southern girl. Sometimes the sections were reversed in the early stories, but after the fall of the Confederacy the man is almost always a strong, silent, tolerant Northerner who accepts his bride's passionate devotion to the Lost Cause as part of her charm. This situation was not popular with Southern writers until after 1877. One reason for the wide use of the theme of divided lovers was that it occurred very often in life. Also, the situation became a symbol of the relations of the sections, and its sentimental solution was an indirect but powerful argument for reconciliation.² The presence of women in the war-stricken regions and the general use made by both armies of "lady" spies encouraged the use of the old "transvestite" or disguise theme, dear to the writers of early nineteenth century American military drama. This somewhat startling presence of female soldiers in camp and field,

¹See the Subject Index to the Dictionary Catalogue for lists of fiction dealing with specific places, battles, personages, and main aspects of the conflict. The chronological arrangement of the items under each topic shows in what periods each subject was widely used.

²See, for example, Thompson's His Second Campaign, Harris's "Aunt Fountain's Prisoner," DeForest's The Bloody Chasm, Harte's Clarence.

unknown to all about them, was popular in the sixties and again to a limited degree in the nineties. A more ancient and noble literary motive, that of divided kinsmen, was often used in this fiction, partly because it, too, so often occurred in real life. It is usually brothers who are in the opposite armies, and thus become the prototypes of their sections. A closely allied theme is that of magnanimous foes or friendly enemies, which did not flourish until the eighties. The exaltation of illness and death, the potency of psychic visions and dreams, and situations permitting passion with modesty were the stock in trade of the little tale-tellers.

Certain characters, the creatures rather of these situations than of any place or action, are often repeated. The noble Union hero and his Southern sweetheart are opposed by a wicked Confederate, a weakling Southern aristocrat, or a brutal Yankee overseer. Soldiers are heroic gentlemen or comic plebeians, the latter often Irish, much in the vein of Lever. Even the fantastic vivandière, a by-product of war in an age of sentiment, becomes a type.¹ The greatest variations in handling a type character are shown with the negro, who appears in three familiar aspects: the noble child of nature, kinsman of Uncle Tom; the faithful retainer of chivalry, now a devoted slave; and the comic darkey of minstrel manners. For a decade after '61 the noble, abused negro appeared often in Radical fiction, and then was lost sight of; the Southern writers increasingly elaborated the portrait of the noble slave, devoted to his master. Even at the end of the century, the negroes

¹See, however, in Mrs. Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie (New York, 1906), pp. 82-83, the following description of a vivandière in real life: "Today in the drawing-room saw a vivandière in the flesh. She was in the uniform of her regiment, but wore Turkish pantaloons. . . ." It is easy to exaggerate the artificiality of these fictional characters.

in the stories of Paul Laurence Dunbar and Charles Chesnutt follow the Southern tradition. With the war fiction the character of the Southern poor white made his entrance in a new light, idealized by humanitarian writers and realistically portrayed by his neighbors in the sections where he lived.¹

By 1890 there is a certain uniformity about the fiction dealing with the war, which appears not only in the recurrence of these conventional themes and characters but in a sameness of tone and outlook. Patriotism prevails; optimism is general.² Despite the realistic movement in literature, whatever realism had been expressed about the war was largely objective, a faithfulness to geography, to manners, and to military strategy. These fields had been traversed often; future romancers could only work them over with variation. Any important new contribution to the fictional treatment of the war and its aftermath must involve either the

¹For a more detailed study of some conventional characters and themes see the Dictionary Catalogue as follows:

Lovers from opposite sections: 33, 34, 39, 64, 79, 84, 95, 101, 103, 110, 111, 120, 121, 129, 137, 138, 159, 165, 172, 199, 202, 208, 226, 253, 265, 268, 272, 278, 280, 282, 283, 286, 287, 295, 310, 312, 317, 318, 326, 332, 335, 341, 342, 348, 363, 368, 369, 370, 375, 378, 382, 384, 395, 401, 416, 437, 440, 441, 444, 449, 454, 457, 463, 472, 494, 497, 508, 510.

Divided kinsmen: 78, 115, 118, 148, 316, 366, 368, 403, 445, 467, 507.

Magnanimous foes: 208, 213, 379, 449, 485, 486.

Transvestite theme: 5, 71, 78, 95, 98, 122, 162, 253, 277, 314, 385, 463, 469, 490.

Noble negro (Northern view): 7, 8, 12, 17, 26, 24, 36, 47, 66, 67, 74, 76, 78, 85, 95, 102, 111, 115, 123, 143, 145, 175, 179, 190, 197, 199, 211, 221, 228, 249, 252, 254, 258, 299, 312, 316.

Faithful slave (Southern view): 91, 105, 110, 130, 134, 154, 161, 171, 187, 189, 231, 255, 302, 310, 311, 317, 319, 323, 330, 343, 348, 359, 360, 365, 367, 368, 373, 379, 382, 395, 431, 470, 472, 475, 476, 480, 509, 510, 512.

Poor whites: See Subject Index.

²An anonymous reviewer in *Appleton's*, XI (1881), 138, writes characteristically: "In spite of its sufferings, its cruelties, and even its brutalities, there is nearly always something noble and inspiring about war. . . . Already we Americans . . . have come to regard the period of the civil war as the heroic age of the republic. . . ."

[Note: The Dictionary Catalogue, of which the Subject Index is a part, is to be found only in the complete dissertation on file in the University of Chicago Libraries.]

shifting of realism from objective to subjective materials, or a change in attitude toward war in general and the Civil War in particular.

IV

There are scattered instances of frank writing about the war before 1890, and a few analyses of the mental states of those who took part in it. Gory details of battle and the outrages committed by the enemy were never taboo even among the romanticists; and certain unpleasant matters like battlefield embalming got into fiction that was close to facts.¹ Revelations of graft and sordid civilian life were fairly usual. It was regarding the psychology and conduct of the soldier that literature was most idealistic; yet even so we find occasional early examples of realism. The fiction writers seem to have followed the lead of the authors of personal narratives in admitting that fighting men are often cowards and not heroes; at least the writers of reminiscences sounded the note earlier and oftener.² Little pieces of fiction appeared at intervals which tried to show the grimness of battle. The Galaxy in 1871 contained an anonymous story, "A Night in the Wilderness," in which a veteran tells how he wandered over the field after the slaughter. The same magazine ran Charles B. Lewis's "Fate's Choice" (1876), wherein the lone survivor of a company of a hundred men counts off the roll of the dead from First Manassas to the Wilderness, victims of the chances of war. Lewis,

¹William M. Runkel, Wontus; or, The Corps of Observation (1874), pp. 290-91. A weak imitation of Pickwick, including a trip to the field of the Seven Days' fighting.

²John W. DeForest, "Port Hudson," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XXXV (1867), 334-44: "If you want to know how a hero feels in the trenches get behind a tree not quite big enough to cover you. . . This is not the poetical view of battle, as you find it in Charles O'Malley and Guy Livingstone..."

better known as "M. Quad," the humorist of the Detroit Free Press, illustrates the connection between humor and realism which was apparent in the work of such men as Locke and Newell. In a volume by Lewis in 1884, Sawed-Off Sketches; Humorous and Pathetic, an ironic little tale is inserted amid the miscellany. "Left on the Field" tells precisely the horrors of being left wounded after the battle.

There was a lull in the firing for fifteen seconds as the battery charged front, and then a shell tore through our center and battered six or eight men into a bloody pulp. . . .

"Where am I? The afternoon sky is over-head--the roar of battle is in my ears--I am lying on my back on the ground. ."

This is glory. Scream and shriek, but some one has won fame. . . . So and so until midnight comes and goes, and then the lanterns flash, the ghouls speed away, and friends carefully lift up the wounded and carry white faces as they find comrades stiff and stark in pools of clotted gore.

And all this for--what?¹

Yet these few pieces of realism were lost in the mass of orthodox views; they followed no literary tradition and they established none.

With the war stories of Ambrose Bierce in Soldiers and Civilians (1891) and Can Such Things Be? (1893) a new note was struck.² Although it is hardly correct to say that Bierce was "about the only writer who fought in the Civil War who allowed truthful memories of the conflict to get on paper,"³ his body of stories is the beginning of a different treatment of the war in fiction. Bierce knew the war from having fought through it as a Union officer,⁴ and there are no better reminiscences of it than parts of his Bits of Autobiography, especially "What I Saw of

¹Charles B. Lewis, "Left on the Field," in Sawed-Off Sketches (New York, 1884), pp. 197-201.

²Soldiers and Civilians, later titled In the Midst of Life. Tales of Soldiers and Civilians, contains 15 war stories; Can Such Things Be?, 5; there are 2 small tales in Negligible Tales.

³C. Hartley Grattan, Bitter Bierce. A Mystery of American Letters (New York, 1929), p. 138.

⁴Napier Wilt, "Ambrose Bierce and the Civil War," American Literature, I (1929), 260-85.

Shiloh," the account of his first share in modern warfare on a large scale. His soldiering days remained for him "beautiful and strange."

And this was, O, so long ago! How they come back to me--dimly and brokenly, but with what a magic spell--those years of youth when I was soldiering!

O days when all the world was beautiful and strange, . . . will your fine, far memories ever cease to lay contrasting pictures athwart the harsher features of this later world, accentuating the ugliness of the longer and tamer life?¹

Bierce's biographers concur in stressing the importance of the war in determining his outlook on life.² In addition to his personal satisfactions and memories, the war, especially after Shiloh, seems to have revealed to him the blundering chance and stupid forces that can overwhelm an individual. The basic soundness of the individual soldier on both sides Bierce never doubted; he had the greatest admiration and respect for his late foes.³ But he was scornful of the whole system on which modern life is organized. In the Devil's Dictionary, begun in 1881, many of his definitions reveal his attitudes.

History, n. An account mostly false, of events mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers, mostly knaves, and soldiers, mostly fools.

Peace, n. In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

War, n. A by-product of the arts of peace.⁴

Regarding the forces that send a man to certain death in a charge on the enemy's guns, or drop him by a rope from Owl Creek Bridge Bierce had no illusions. Over and over he shows a brave man caught in a fatal trap not of his own making, or crucified by

¹"What I Saw of Shiloh" in Bits of Autobiography, Collected Works (New York, 1909), I, 269. Published in the San Francisco Examiner, 1898.

²C. Hartley Grattan, op. cit., pp. 14-15; Carey McWilliams, Ambrose Bierce (New York, 1929), pp. 59ff; Adolphe DeCastro, Portrait of Ambrose Bierce (New York, 1929), pp. 3-18.

³Bits of Biography, p. 341.

⁴The Devil's Dictionary, Collected Works (New York, 1911), VII, 138, 248, 358.

his own fear. "Killed at Resaca" is the story of a man done to death by a woman he loves, who taunts him into foolhardiness. "The Coup de Grâce" and "One Kind of Officer" are cases where men who do the decent thing are sacrificed to malign or stupid codes. Bierce is a cynic about life in general, but for its gallant vic-times he reserves an accolade. He is, as it were, a disappointed idealist. His stories, as a consequence, show a combination of old and new literary fashions. Many of his characters and situations were trite in 1891. Divided kinsmen in "A Horseman Against the Sky," and again in "The Mockingbird" and "Three and One are Three;" magnanimous foes in "A Conscience;" and a love triangle in "An Affair at Coulter's Notch,"--all these had been done often. Coincidences, the presence of the supernatural, and the un-laid ghost of fear recur frequently, to link Bierce with the Gothic tradition of the early part of the century. As a matter of fact, Bierce had no affiliations with the current realists, and accused "Miss Nancy Howells" and "Miss Nancy James" of advocating "expurgated editions, emasculated art, and social customs that look over the top of a fan."¹ Yet in spite of these conservative elements, the stories of Bierce about the war were new in their disillusion and their terse style. His cynicism helped to keep them from winning immediate recognition; it is an open question to what extent he influenced other short story writers before 1900.

Hamlin Garland, who declared himself a "veritist,"² turned his attention to the Middle Border where the end of an epoch was marked, not by '61-'65, but by the closing of the frontier. He wrote a single story dealing with the war, but "The Return of a

¹"On with the Dance! A Review" in Collected Works (New York, 1911), VIII, 267. Carey McWilliams, op. cit., p. 237, dates this as appearing in the Californian, February, 1890.

²Crumbling Idols (Chicago and Cambridge, 1894), p. 21.

"Private" (1891) stands as an example of the use of literary naturalism in dealing with it. It tells no more than how Private Smith, a Wisconsin soldier for the Union, came home at the end to the wife and children and farm he had left. In theme, in plot, and in style it is plain and bare. War is reduced at last to the lowest common denominator, the ordinary soldier; and Garland's rejection of military glamor is plainly seen in Smith's broken body and run-down farm.

The realism of Harold Frederic's war stories of the nineties is, like Garland's, local color carried beyond setting and manners to the creation of provincial characters. His region is the dairying country of New York State, where he was a farmhand and photographer before he became a journalist. His fiction is as close to his background as Garland's and sometimes as grim, except that Frederic has a turn for pathos and a habit of adopting the viewpoint of a boy, both of which temper his sternness. He aligned himself with the forces for realism as early as 1887 with the publication of Seth's Brother's Wife, laid in rural New York; then after a historical romance of the Mohawk Valley and one other novel, he first utilized the Civil War in 1892 in The Return of the O'Mahoney. It is a poor work, partly because it lacks unity. A convincing opening scene in the Union camps before Petersburg in March, 1865, proves to be merely a prologue to a title hunt in Ireland. Frederic must have seen its faults, for the next year he published a well-constructed short novel of wartimes, The Copperhead, set in his own region. Abner Beech, a patriarchal farmer and a Jeffersonian Democrat, pitted against the abolitionist, Jee Hagadorn, goes down in defeat before the logic of events. For the purposes of the plot, his son, a Union soldier, weds Hagadorn's daughter. It was Frederic's misfortune that he went no further in

his study of Abner than to present a happy ending when the hero yields to communal patriotism without seeing there the elements of tragedy. This failure shows the limitations of nearly all the author's studies of the war; he has a literary technique quick to report it faithfully but he has no convictions concerning it. Bierce as a pessimist and Garland as a reformer both discard the old patriotic loyalties, but Frederic remains a local colorist greatly skilled in portraying hitherto neglected aspects of the struggle. "Marsena" (1894) illustrates his ability to create character. Marsena Pulford, a soulful small town photographer, type of the inarticulate countryman longing for culture, is doubly snared, first by the town belle and then by the war. We leave him dying on the field of Malvern Hill, still clutching at the white skirts of romance. A half dozen stories like "Marsena" would rank Frederic with Bierce and Garland and Crane, but none other attains its ironic detachment.

The first American novelist to approach the subject of war solely from the standpoint of art was Stephen Crane. Of a generation too young to have experiences to draw on or hatreds, he had acquired no political idealisms or social convictions. He was an artist in 1893 looking for a subject worthy of him. His first novel, Maggie, had met with slight encouragement because of its naturalism. According to his biographer, Crane then "raided piles of old magazines in the studio of Corwin Knapp Linson and complained to the illustrator that nobody had written anything worth reading about the Civil War. He dropped in, one Sunday, at the house of Mrs. Armstrong . . . and borrowed the Century's 'Battles and Leaders' after her father had assured him that these were accurate."¹ The only other sources mentioned by his biographer are

¹Thomas Beer, Stephen Crane (New York, 1923), 3, 42-47, 97-99. Beer also stresses the "vulgar stories" Crane heard from veterans as a source of his knowledge of war.

Le Debauche, the Castlemon books read in his youth, and Harper's Pictorial History of the Rebellion. However, it may safely be assumed that Crane knew more of the fiction about the war than this meagre list, and that his preparation included more than a raid on a private pile of magazines. In 1895 appeared The Red Badge of Courage, and Episode in the American Civil War, which was an immediate success with the critics and the public. It is precisely an episode, the physical and psychological struggles of a young Union soldier in a great battle. The reader knows no more about the political purposes or the military strategy guiding the two armies than did Henry Fleming or any other private who fought there. Most of the men are decent, and their endeavors to behave bravely are all that matter particularly. Crane's cool indifference toward traditional idealisms is a more complete break with the past than either Bierce's cynical fatalism or Frederic's pathetic ironies. The technique of his novel, presenting a sequence of brilliant impressions, belongs to the new realistic movement.

Crane wrote other stories of the Civil War, none so successful as his first, although one, "The Little Regiment," is nearly as effective. Sometimes he drops into the use of conventional plots, as in "A Gray Sleeve," and then he is not notably more realistic than a dozen other writers of the time. He participated eagerly in the Spanish-American war as a correspondent, and went on writing war stories about it. Modern war, with its irrational brutalities and emotional upheavals, served him admirably for his material. But his attitude toward it remained that of the artist. Crane's influence upon war fiction was more immediate and wide-spread than that of Bierce or Frederic, although

it has been exaggerated by recent critics.¹ Others were beginning to study the psychology of the soldier at about the same time;² but it was after the Red Badge that such stories increased.³

This small body of notable fiction dealing with the war by the advanced realists of the nineties made little headway against the traditional modes of treating it. The local colorists repeated their successes of the eighties and new writers imitated them.⁴ The list of Civil War stories and novels in this decade, which is almost as large as in the sixties, is increased, too, by the reappearance of a few older writers like Rebecca Harding Davis and Tourgee⁵, and by the fact that old soldiers like George Cary Eggleston, George E. Waring, and W. H. Shelton, who had done little

¹Thomas Beer, op. cit., pp. 127-28; Joseph Hergesheimer, Introduction to The Red Badge of Courage (New York, 1924), p. xviii.

²James B. Wilson, "An Actual Experience Under Fire," McClure's, II (1894), 486-88. A careful analysis of mental states, published too late to have influenced Crane, but also too early to have been influenced by him.

³Ira Seymour, "The Song of the Rappahanock," McClure's, VIII (1897), 314-20; Joseph Altsheler, "At the Twelfth Hour," Atlantic Monthly, LXXXII (1898) 541-52; "After the Battle," Lippincott's LXI (1898), 379-88; Charles B. Lewis, "The Recruit who was Rushed," Lippincott's, LXI (1898), 518-24.

⁴See Alice French, Expiation (1890); Constance Cary Harrison, Flower de Hundred (1890); Mrs. Mary S. N. Tiernan, Jack Horner (1890); James Lane Allen, "Two Gentlemen of Kentucky" in Flute and Violin (1891); Alice French, Otto the Knight and other Trans-Mississippi Stories (1891); Molly Elliott Seawell, Maid Marian and Other Stories (1891); Constance Cary Harrison, Belhaven Tales (1892); Sarah Orne Jewett, "Decoration Day" (1892); Grace King, Tales of a Time and Place (1892); Alice French, Stories of a Western Town (1893); Grace King, Balcony Stories (1893); Kate Chopin, Bayou Folk (1894); Mary E. Moore Davis, Under the Man-Fig (1895); Jeannette R. H. Walworth, Uncle Scipio; a Story of Uncertain Days in the South (1896); Virginia Boyle Frazer, Brokenburne. A Southern Auntie's War Tale (1897); John Trotwood Moore, Old Mistis (1897); Sarah Barnwell Elliott, An Incident and Other Happenings (1899); Mary N. Murfree, The Bushwhackers and Other Stories (1899); Will N. Harben, Northern Georgia Sketches (1900); Maurice Thompson, Stories of the Cherokee Hills (1900).

⁵See Albion W. Tourgee, A Son of Old Harry (1891); Rebecca Harding Davis, Silhouettes of American Life (1892); Albion W. Tourgee, "The Grave of Tante Angelique" in The Man Who Outlived Himself (1898).

or no fiction before, now published volumes of war tales.¹ John McElroy, an enterprising journalist, revived the homely comedy of Si Klegg and his partner, created by Hinman a dozen years before.² It was also a time when numerous aging persons and amateurs took advantage of popular interest and easy publishing conditions to concoct stories about the war, reviving all the worn-out fashions and prejudices of an older generation.³ The appearance of these poor novels from the presses of publishers who in most instances must have hoped to sell them is in itself a sign of a general interest in any sort of fiction on the subject.

A few minor novels of this decade have deservedly been rescued from total oblivion. Lydia C. Wood's The Haydocks' Testimony (1890), a quiet, honest tale of the Quackers in North Carolina under the Confederacy, has remained of interest to pacifists. The Captain of Company K (1891), by Joseph Kirkland, is disappointing from the author of Zury, but has elements of honesty. From Helen H. Gardener's An Unofficial Patriot (1894) James A. Herne fashioned his realistic drama, The Reverend Griffith Davenport, performed in 1899.⁴

¹See William H. Shelton, A Man Without a Memory and Other Stories (1895); and "The Man with the Bacon Rind" (1897); George E. Waring, Whip and Spur (1897); George Cary Eggleston, Southern Soldier Stories (1898).

²John McElroy, Si and Shorty at Tullahoma (1899) carries the advertisement that it was "written especially for, and appeared exclusively in The National Tribune, Washington, D.C." Its debt in story and characters to Hinman's Corporal Si Klegg and His Pard (1887) is nowhere indicated, but is unmistakable.

³See W. C. Bartlett, An Idyl in War-times (1890); Emma Lyon Bryan, 1860-1865, A Romance of the Valley of Virginia (1892); Augustin Thompson, A Waif in the Conflict of Civilizations (1892); Mrs. Florida P. Reed, Vesta; or, The Hidden Cross (1894); H. L. Piner, Ruth, a Romance of the Civil War (1895); Capers Dickson, John Ashton, A Story of the War between the States (1896); Vance Wilson, God's War (1899).

⁴See Quinn, op.cit., pp. 150-56. As most of the manuscript of the play is lost, knowledge of it rests in part on the novel. Quinn is hardly fair to certain elements of restraint in the novel as compared with the play.

The nineties witnessed in American fiction a revival of romance which took the form most conspicuously of the historical novel. The reasons for the revival are not simple. One critic refers it chiefly to the influence of Stevenson,¹ another to Du Maurier's Tilby.² Howells, writing in 1900, pointed out the passing of a generation of realistic writers, and also the jingoism of the American people.³ All historical periods were levied upon for subjects, but especially the American Revolution and the colonial era. The Civil War inevitably came in for a share of the revival, although it was not the favorite theme, nor do the romantic novels of this movement constitute as large a proportion of Civil War fiction as is commonly stated. The romantic novel of adventure dealing with the Civil War got established in the eighties.

An instance of the rising interest in history as a subject for fiction is the case of Bret Harte. In an interview published in McClure's in 1894 he commented upon the particular case of the war.

In America ... the great field is the late war. The dramatists have found and used it, but the novelists, the romance writers, have in it the richest possible field for works of serious import, and yet, outside of short stories, they seem to have passed it over. If I had time, nothing would please me better than to go over the ground, or portions of it, and make use of it for future work. Our war of the Revolution is not good material for cosmopolitan purposes. This country has never quite forgotten the way it ended. But the war of Rebellion was and is our own; its dramatic and emotional aspects are infinite; and while American writers are coming abroad for scenes to picture, I am in constant fear that some Englishman or Frenchman will go to America and reap the field in romance which we should now, all local feeling having passed away, be utilizing to our own fame and profit.⁴

¹Carl VanDoren, op. cit., p. 246.

²Herbert Edwards, "The Controversy over Realism in American Fiction," American Literature, III (1931), p. 245.

³William Dean Howells, "The New Historical Romances," North American Review, CLXXI (1900), 935-48.

⁴Henry J. W. Dam, "A Morning with Bret Harte," McClure's, IV (1894), p. 50.

He had himself recently published three long short stories about the wartime, "Colonel Starbottle's Client" (1892), "Sally Dows" (1893), and "Mrs. Bunker's Conspiracy" (1893). Colonel Starbottle is modelled on the tradition of Colonel Sellers, while Sally Dows is the familiar type of the imperious Southern beauty. In the light of Harte's burlesque of Belle Boyd a quarter of a century before, it is significant to see him carrying over his pre-conceptions of Southern character. In "Mrs. Bunker's Conspiracy" a Southern gentleman spy operating on the California coast in '61 is outwitted by an honest woman. Soon after his interview on literary matters, Harte published a novel, Clarence (1895), which retains his usual stereotyped Southern characters, plus a perfect Union officer, two or more spies, and an unlocalized battle in which one lady spy is killed. The only "serious import" which he succeeded in embodying in his fiction on the war was the old partisan character contrast of the sixties; in other respects he borrowed from melodrama.

Thomas C. DeLeon, a Southern journalist who had been on Jefferson Davis's staff in his youth, won a belated success as a romance writer in the nineties. He was a colleague of Grady and Watterson in the New South movement, and carefully devised his rather trite romances to argue for reconciliation. Creole and Puritan (1891) was praised for its lack of prejudice. DeLeon was not of the local color school, which fact may account for his belated literary success.

Straight adventure got its hearing in the nineties, too. It was probably of such stories that Howells was thinking when he spoke of dime novels having got into good society. An example is the work of Frederick A. Mitchel, son of a Union general, whose Chattanooga (1891), Chickamauga (1892), and Sweet Revenge (1897)

are stage melodrama placed in a convincing setting. The short stories of Joseph Altsheler and Robert W. Chambers, just at the end of the century, show perhaps the influence of Stephen Crane, but they are also adventure stories. The "rococo" romance, the graceful sort of story that Ford did in Janice Meredith, found few followers in the writers on the Civil War. Cable essayed it with fair success in The Cavalier (1901), but his novel lacks the charm of the stories of the romantic revival on other historical themes.

This romantic revival helped to direct the attention of American critics at the end of the century to the status of the historical novel as a genre.¹ The realists had consistently challenged its value and artistic merits. Howells said that the best and, with a few exceptions, the only true historical novels were those novels of manners that portrayed the age in which they were written. Historical romances he thought fit for "harmless people" who wished to be amused.² When Paul Leicester Ford undertook a defense of the genre of which he was practitioner as well as critic, he began by making his peace with the realists and defining the novel as historical when it embodies "the real feelings and tendencies of the age of generation it attempts to depict, and in no sense because the events it records have happened or the people it describes have lived."³ Brander Matthews pointed out the "inherent defects" of the genre and declared it out of vogue.⁴ Although Frank Norris of the advanced realists had a good word

¹Ernest Bernbaum, "The views of the Great Critics on the Historical Novels," Publications of the Modern Language Association, XLI (1926), 424-41.

²"The New Historical Romances," North American Review, CLXXI (1900), 935-48.

³Paul Leicester Ford, "The American Historical Novel," Atlantic Monthly, LXXX (1897), 724.

⁴Brander Matthews, The Historical Novel and Other Essays (New York, 1901), pp. 3-38. The essay on the historical novel was written in 1897.

for the historical novel,¹ most of the critics agreed to disparage it.² And Howells's prediction in 1900 that its popular vogue was waning came true; within a half dozen years its great day was over.

Certain conclusions may be drawn from a study of the Civil War and its aftermath in American fiction from 1861 to 1899. There was never a lack of popular interest in the theme except for a time during reconstruction; consequently the number of novels and short stories is large. In general, the trends are those of all American fiction of the period, although we note certain special conditions. The fiction dealing with the war is perhaps the most vivid American fiction of the sixties; in the seventies it lags behind the line of main developments; in the eighties it is important, especially in the local color school. During the nineties the Civil War received its most significant treatment from the advanced realists, not from the rococo romancers, who as a rule did not handle it to advantage. It is in the short story, not in the novel, that the war has been most strongly written about.

The aesthetic quality of most of this fiction is poor, some of it very poor. At its worst, however, it is full of significant revelations of the mental attitudes of various classes and sections whose ideas are embodied in it. Of the works of "distinction" there are few. The Red Badge of Courage is probably the only novel which deserves that denomination, although it is not difficult to name ten or a dozen short stories of that caliber.

Throughout our period the majority of writers reflected the idealistic, patriotic tradition of the Civil War. For such

¹Frank Norris, The Responsibilities of the Novelist (New York, 1903), pp. 15-22.

²Julia Collier Harris, op. cit., p. 565, comments on Joel Chandler Harris's contribution to a symposium on the historical novel for the Atlanta Journal. His view is close to that of Howells regarding "the technically historical novel."

views the established literary medium was the historical romance. Yet this form grew less and less vital in the seventies and eighties, and, despite a revival at the end of the century, fell into disesteem with the critics. No great historical romance was written about the Civil War.

Writers who held anti-romantic views toward the war had no literary tradition to follow before the nineties when Bierce, Frederic, and especially Crane applied new techniques to the theme. These men did not, however, separately or in combination, evolve any consistent anti-romantic theory regarding war. Perhaps largely for this reason they established no literary tradition for realistic war fiction. Not the least significant result of this study is to point out the fact that for half a century after the Civil War the only artistic and powerful expression of it in fiction was in comparatively short forms, a mosaic of individual scenes; that the novelists either could not or would not see it as a whole and in its relation to American life.

